

SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE TABLE OF CONTENTS: (alphabetical order)

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DEFINITION OF ABBREVIATIONS

Parent – Inclusive of legal guardian in this handbook
OCFS – Office of Children and Family Services





Welcome

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of the Norwich Family YMCA Child Care programs is to provide quality care in a safe and supportive environment that fosters the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth of children, while supporting and strengthening families.

LICENSING/REGISTRATION AGENCY

The Child Care programs of the Norwich Family YMCA are licensed through the New York State Office of Child and Family Services. All child care programs are mandated to uphold all of the rules and regulations pertaining to child care licensing and registration.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Norwich Family YMCA Child Care Programs promote the character values of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility, and helpful lifestyles. The program will meet the needs of children at the different stages of development by creating an environment that is relaxed, home-like and fosters independence, cooperation and self-control among the children who participate. The daily schedule is structured so that it allows; a choice of wide range developmentally appropriate activities, balances active and quiet times, and provides opportunities for children to pursue particular interests and develop individual abilities. Children are encouraged to participate in the daily operation of the program, especially on the formulating of behavioral expectations and choosing program themes and activities.

PHILOSOPHY

The Norwich Family YMCA Child Care Philosophy is to deliver a program in a positive environment of safety, support, and care that will allow children the opportunity to relax and participate in variety of interesting age-appropriate activities.



STAFF PHILOSOPHY

We believe the success of our program (and ultimately your child's experience) lies in the quality of our staff. Our staff members are selected based on their experience, education, character, talents, and interpersonal skills. Many of our staff return year to year, and are employed in other YMCA areas, such as Summer Camp, Childwatch, and Aquatics. Our staff comes together for procedures, group work, and curriculum planning. All of our staff have a background check, and Child Abuse Prevention and Detection Training. Above all, our staff have one thing in common - a love for working with children.

ENROLLMENT CRITERIA

YMCA Child Care Programs are open to all families regardless of race, gender, religious affiliation, cultural heritage, financial status, political beliefs, national origin, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation. Registration is first offered to existing participants, then to the established waiting list, and then to the general public. Enrollment capacities are dictated by local and state regulations. Registration packet includes:

- Child Care Information Form.
- Parental Agreement.

Parents must read and sign a statement verifying that they have read the Parent Handbook and understand the policies and procedures set forth by the Child Care Program. A current copy of the child's immunization record must also be attached to the completed forms at the time of registration.

SPECIAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY OF A CHILD

The Youth and Family Director will set up a conference with the Parents before the child may attend the program. An individualized plan will be written which could include changes or modifications in the child's participation in the regular daily activities. In addition any additional equipment that would be necessary will be discussed and decided upon if such accommodation would cause an undue burden on the Child Care Program. A follow up meeting will be set up to

evaluate that the agreed upon plan is meeting the child's needs and if not what necessary changes need to be instituted.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Child care payments are due by the 15th of the month in which services are provided and are not reduced for weeks containing holidays or school closures due to inclement weather. Parents whose payments are late will be charged a \$10 late fee, unless other arrangements have been made with the Billing Coordinator. If payments are three months or more delinquent we reserve the right to remove your child from the program. Parents are responsible for payment if they fail to notify the Y at least 2 hours in advance if their child is not attending on a scheduled participating day. Parents are also responsible to pay for any days that their child attends beyond their regularly scheduled days.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Norwich Family YMCA financial assistance policy states that no person will be denied membership or program participation solely because of inability to pay fees. Financial assistance applications are available at the Y Front Desk. Financial assistance is granted based on available resources of the YMCA. It is our intent that all individuals contribute toward membership and/or program fees.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

All information contained in your child's record is privileged and confidential and cannot be released without your written consent. Authorized representatives of OCFS have the right and responsibility to review all records upon request.

REGISTRATION CHANGES

Any changes in registration information concerning you or your child must be arranged in advance through the YMCA Child Care office (i.e. changes in pickup authorization, address, work or home phone numbers, emergency contacts, etc.) If you are changing your child's scheduled days, advanced notice must be given.

SERVICES PROVIDED

The Norwich Family YMCA Child Care Programs offer children a variety of age-appropriate multi-culturally enriched and diverse activities. These may include homework assistance, computer skills, arts and crafts, sports and games, cooking, music, dance, science, environmental education, fitness, clubs, field trips, special events and swimming (where applicable).

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The Norwich Family YMCA has adopted the character development values of **Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility** which it strives to incorporate and promote in all of its programs.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Staff is responsible for ensuring that children enrolled:

- Have a safe and reliable environment free of hazards.
- Have use of all the equipment and space on an equal basis and are able to find equipment in functioning condition.
- Have their ideas and feelings respected.
- Have discipline that is fair, equal, and respectful of them.
- Have opportunity to express their anger, frustration, disappointment, joy, etc. in an appropriate manner.
- Have activities that allow participants to express their ability as they explore and discover, while developing to their fullest potential.
- Have an environment that offers a variety of choices: physical, gross motor, quiet (without interruptions), indoor, active and passive areas, creative dramatic play, and exploring.
- Have a right to voice their opinion on the rules and have input on activities offered.
- Have staff members that care about them, enjoy being with them, and help them grow.
- Are treated with caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

CHILDREN'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Children need to be responsible for:

- Learning to take consequences for their own actions.
- Displaying character development traits: caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.
- Respecting the rules that are established for and by them during the day.
- Controlling their anger so that their actions do not harm anyone.
- Not willfully damaging any equipment or property in the building or anyone else's property.
- Sharing equipment and facilities with all children in the program.
- Remaining with a staff member at all times and notifying staff if they need to go to another area.
- Being on time with their belongings.
- Dressing appropriately for indoor and outdoor play.
- Returning materials and equipment to the place they found them and before they start a new activity or go home.
- Participating in and carrying out an activity that they committed themselves to.

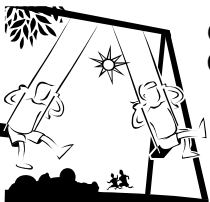
CHILD CARE CONDUCT POLICIES

While participating in the program please be certain that both you and your child are completely familiar with these policies. The Director, upon notification to the parent, may suspend or terminate a child from all activities and participation in the program for the following types of conduct:

1. Leaving YMCA premises without permission, or going into posted unauthorized areas.
2. Use of foul language or rudeness to staff.
3. Defacing YMCA or school property, or field trip facilities.
4. Engaging in fighting as a means of problem solving.
5. Bringing or using illegal substances.
6. Stealing or defacing another child's property.
7. Intentionally injuring another child.
8. Refusing to remain with the group during outings.
9. Refusing to follow check in and out procedures.

CLOTHING

Children at the YMCA program are active and involved. They should wear clothes that are comfortable, practical and wash easily. All belongings should be labeled with the child's name. The Norwich Family YMCA is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing. Please ensure children are dressed properly for cold weather.



OUTDOOR POLICY

Children will have the opportunity to go outdoors. Be prepared for all outdoor conditions. Parents may request and providers may permit children to remain indoors as long as required staff/child ratios are maintained.

NUTRITIOUS SNACK OR LUNCH SUGGESTIONS

The YMCA will ensure that one nutritious snack is provided for the children in our care for more than two hours but less than four. Two snacks are provided for children that are in our care for more than seven hours (lunch provided by parent.) Staff ensures that children thoroughly cleanse their hands with soap and running water when they are dirty, after toileting, before and after food handling, and after any contact with any bodily secretion or fluids. Food preferences for personal, religious, cultural, or medical reasons will be accommodated.

ATTENDANCE

The Norwich Family YMCA Child Care Programs request that if a child is to be absent from a program, the parent must contact the program representative at least two hours prior to the child's normally scheduled arrival at the program (person may vary for each YMCA program.) The parent will be contacted in the event that the child does not arrive at the YMCA program and

previous notice has not been given. If a child does not attend school on any particular day for any reason they may not attend the before or after school child care program. If a child is absent their scheduled day, the parent is still responsible for payment of child care services.

SICKNESS

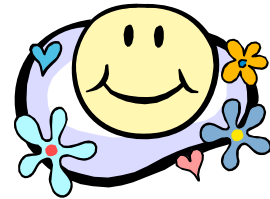
Please keep your child home if he/she seems listless, unusually irritable, complains of stomachache, headache, earache, has a fever or seems to be unusually pale or flushed. It is better to be over cautious than to risk exposing the rest of the children and staff to contagion. If a child becomes ill, (i.e.: fever, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, etc.) during their time at the program, parents will be asked to pick up their child within the hour. The child may return to the program when symptom and fever free, without medication, for 24 hours.

Please notify the YMCA Child Care Program Department immediately if your child is exposed to a contagious disease. The Director will notify you if and when it is necessary to keep your child at home. All parents will be given notice if a child in the program has been reported having a contagious disease. Notices will include information on symptoms and general information on the contagion. Please see that your child keeps reasonable bedtime hours. Their day can be spoiled if they are tired. Children, on average, need 10 hours of sleep each night.

It is the sole responsibility of the parent for payment of all medical bills. The Norwich Family YMCA holds no medical insurance for program participants. Therefore, please make sure your child's insurance carrier and policy numbers are listed on the information forms.

HEALTH POLICIES

OCFS regulations require that an up-to-date information form be on file for each child attending the program. Children who become ill may not remain in the program. A child who is suspected of having a communicable disease will be isolated from the other children. Parents will be contacted to pick their child up within the hour.



We have set up the following guidelines on illness; these guidelines will be followed unless your physician states in writing that your child may attend.

Keep your child home if they have:

- a.) A temperature of 101 or above.
- b.) Conjunctivitis (pink eye).
- c.) Impetigo.
- d.) Diarrhea (more than one instance in a 12 hour period).
- e.) Vomiting.
- f.) Severe cold with fever.
- g.) Contagious disease (I.e., strep, fifth's disease, chicken pox, scarlet fever, coxsackie's virus)
- h.) Head lice.
- i.) Ring worm.

We understand that keeping a child home may impose problems. Please understand that bringing an unhealthy child to child care may affect the health of other children and staff.

ALLERGIES AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION

Any allergies to food, chemicals, or other materials should be listed in the "Allergies" section of the child's information form. This information will be placed on a master list and posted. All staff will be informed of child's allergies, and instructed to avoid these products.

MEDICATION POLICY

The Norwich YMCA After School Programs are NOT licensed to administer prescription medications. Parents may sign a permission form for the administration of over the counter topicals such as sun screen or bug spray.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Staff will treat children experiencing minor injuries or illness such as bumps, bruises, scrapes, bee stings, and stomach upsets, taking note of specifications on the child's health form. Sick children will be isolated from other program participants and have their condition monitored until a Parent arrives. Parents will be informed of any First Aid given to their child.

In the case of a major emergency such as broken bones, puncture wounds, etc., the child will be transported by ambulance to the nearest medical facility. All health forms on file will include child and parent information, emergency numbers when parents cannot be reached and a medical release to seek treatment if parents cannot be reached.



FIRE DRILLS

Fire Drills will be held monthly. In case of an emergency evacuation, children will be taken to a pre-determined evacuation site.

EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Norwich Family YMCA Emergency Procedures are as follows:

- A child who is injured at the program will be transported to the nearest emergency medical facility by ambulance. Parents or guardians will be immediately notified of the child's injury. If parents cannot be contacted, the emergency contact list will be called. A staff member and your child's medical file will accompany the child to the nearest medical facility to await the child's parent or emergency contact person.
- If a child is injured at a field trip location, a staff member will assess the injury and instruct a fellow staff member to obtain the child's emergency contact members and phone an ambulance, parent or emergency contact person. The child will then be transported to the designated medical facility accompanied by a staff member. The staff member will stay with the child until the child's parent, guardian, or emergency contact person arrives at the medical facility.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

In addition to following school rules and building policies, rules for positive behavior appear in the segment "Children's Responsibilities" and are shared with both parents and children prior to enrollment. Basic rules include respect for each other, the property of others, the YMCA facility, the child's safety, and the security of the group. Children have input in deciding rules for their group and in the establishment of acceptable group standards.

Behavior management is accomplished through a positive approach that respects the child as an individual. Discipline procedures are handled individually, usually with a mild consequence that is associated with the particular infraction.

Please notify the YMCA if you are going to be away for several days and your child will be in the care of someone else. This sometimes affects your child's behavior. It is also important for us to know who is responsible when you are away. Throughout the school year, if there is anything unusual going on in your home, please let the Site Director or Youth & Family Director know. Even though your child may seem not to have been affected, it may show up in their behavior.

PROGRESSIVE METHODS OF DISCIPLINE APPROVED FOR YMCA CHILD CARE WORKERS

- Establish "House Rules". Make sure they are stated in the positive. Tell children what they CAN do. Children should help establish rules.
- Allow transition time and warnings before they occur.
- Give verbal warnings/reminders.
- Redirection.
- Talk through the problem with the child.
- The child is encouraged to suggest alternative solutions and assist in implementing them.
- Cool Down Time (a quiet time for the child in a designated place within view of the staff):
 - Remove child from activity.
 - Ask the child to sit away from the group.
 - After 1-2 minutes (five minutes maximum) ask the child the reason why they were removed and if they are ready to return to the activity.
 - Explain the behavior expected in the future.
- If behavior continues to be an issue, establish a behavior contract with the child and parent.
- Discuss problematic situations with the child's parent(s) and incorporate their suggestions into the child's behavior management plan.
- Write a report and have it signed by the parent, for unsafe behavioral incidents.
- Three incident reports may constitute a suspension from the program. (Parents are still liable for payment for days suspended due to inappropriate behavior.)

Severe behavioral issues which impose harm to themselves, others, or property needs to be taken to the Youth & Family Director. The Director then will contact the parent(s) and set up a conference. A solution is usually made together as to the outcome and/or disciplinary procedure to take place. The final step is for the Director, parent(s) and child to meet to clarify behavioral expectations for the future.

In all cases, suspension and/or release of a child from the Child Care program is the final decision of the Youth and Family Director. Although a last resort, release from the program may be necessary to ensure the safety of your child and of other children in the group. The YMCA understands that our programs cannot meet everyone's needs. The YMCA reserves the right to suspend or release a child from any program for a single incident due to severity.

STRATEGIES TO HELP PREVENT CHILD ABUSE

These preventative strategies are designed to protect the children, staff and volunteers in YMCA programs.

1. The YMCA has in place a comprehensive pre-employment screening procedure to screen out staff not suited for working with children.
2. The YMCA will take any allegation or suspicion of child abuse seriously.
3. Staff understand their legal obligation to report suspected abuse.
4. Policies, procedures, and training are available related to discipline, supervision, staff/participation interaction, staff and volunteer Code of Conduct, etc.
5. Staff understand what practices may be considered abusive, and the difference between what may be considered appropriate and inappropriate touch.
6. Defensive strategies have been identified for avoiding unfounded allegations.
7. Staff communicate frequently with parents regarding day-to-day activities and encourage parents to report or question any behavior or event their child may share that appears out of the ordinary.
8. Parents are encouraged to visit, unannounced, to any program their child participates in.
10. Staff try to identify stressed parents and offer support and referrals for help.

11. Staff have learned how to discuss sensitive issues with children.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE CASES

In order to ensure the well-being of the children in our care, staff are mandated under state law to report incidents of possible neglect or abuse, including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, to the Child Abuse Hotline, and to cooperate in any investigation for such possible neglect or abuse.

The YMCA does not have discretion in this matter, but must make such referrals whenever we have reasonable cause to believe that a child might have been harmed by anyone, including a non-family member, and we may be subject to criminal penalties if we fail to report such possible harm. Moreover, in grievous cases, we may also refer the matter directly to the police.

The YMCA advocates a positive guidance and discipline policy with an emphasis on positive reinforcement, prevention and the development of self-discipline.

YMCA staff and volunteers need to be sensitive to each person's need for personal space. The YMCA encourages appropriate touch; however, at the same time it prohibits inappropriate touch or other means of sexually exploiting children.

In the event that there is an accusation of suspicion of child abuse, the YMCA will take prompt and immediate actions as follows:

- 1) The mandated reporter (employee) must notify the person in charge (Youth and Family Director) or his/her designee who then also becomes responsible to notify Child Protective Services or cause such notification to be made. However, this requirement does not give the person in charge the power to prohibit a report from being made, nor does it relieve the original source from ensuring that a report is made. The person in charge (Youth and Family Director), or his/her designee, will notify the Local County Child Protective Services immediately at any time of the day or week by calling the hotline.

**The New York State Central Register of Child Maltreatment
1-800-342-3720**

- 2) Information to include in the report. The following information should be included in oral and written reports:
 - a) Child (ren)'s name, address, sex, age.
 - b) Facts about the injury or suspected harm to the child.
 - c) Physical indicators observed.
 - d) Behavioral indicators observed.
 - e) Other indicators observed/known.
 - f) Any knowledge of earlier injuries or problems.
 - g) Name of the person responsible for suspected maltreatment.
 - h) Facts about the family.
 - i) Your name and where you can be reached.
 - j) What action, if any, taken by you to protect the child. Whenever you are on the staff of an institution, school, facility, or agency, you must immediately notify the designated person in charge and that person may take or arrange for, at public expense, color photographs of visible trauma. Any photographs must be sent to the Child Protective Services at the time the written report (OCFS-2221A) is sent or as soon thereafter as possible.
- 3) At this point, the person in charge, or his designee, will ask the CPS worker to determine if the circumstances as described warrants reporting the incident.
- 4) The person in charge, or his designee, immediately implements the directions as given by the CPS worker:

- a) If a CPS report is not recommended by the CPS worker; this fact, plus any other advice or directions given, should be noted on an incident report and the appropriate staff notified so as to ensure compliance. The YMCA Executive Director should promptly receive a copy of this incident report.
 - b) If a CPS report is warranted in the opinion of the CPS worker, it is to be immediately reported. An incident report is to be completed and promptly forwarded to the YMCA Executive Director.
- 5) If a CPS report was deemed necessary, within 48 hours after such oral report, form OCFS 2221A (Report of Suspected Child Abuse or Maltreatment) shall be completed and mailed to the Local County Child Protective Services. A copy of this form should also be forwarded to the Branch Executive. This form (OCFS 2221A) should be requested from the CPS worker when a report is made. Written reports from persons or officials required by law to report shall be admissible as evidence in any judicial proceedings related to child maltreatment.
 - 6) The YMCA shall make all efforts to protect the confidential nature of such reports and may request that the reporter's name and the YMCA program also remain confidential, if warranted.
 - 7) As a follow-up, the person in charge will request a summary of the findings of any action taken by the child's protective service in response to the report.
 - 8) Other Actions. If the child or program staff are determined to be in immediate danger, a call should be made to law enforcement officials.

PARENT VISITS/CONFERENCES

The YMCA encourages parents to visit our program at anytime. Parents may also call at any time to discuss concerns or to set up an appointment if they would like to request a conference.

PICK UP AUTHORIZATION

The Pickup Authorization must be completed by the parent prior to the child's enrollment in the child care program. If a child is to be picked up by someone other than an authorized person, the program must be notified within twenty-four hours in writing by completing a pickup authorization form at the child's site. Parents or designated persons picking up children must come into the building with photo identification to pickup the child. For your child's safety, we will not allow your child to leave the site without staff authorization. All persons authorized to pickup must be at least sixteen years of age. Please be aware that if the staff suspects you have been consuming alcohol/drugs you will be asked to have someone else pickup your child.

LATE PICKUP POLICY

When a parent is late picking up their child the YMCA has established these firm policies:
 Extended Child Watch – This service may be used from 5:30-6:00 Monday through Thursday for an added fee of \$2.00. Parents must contact the Y in advance to use this service. Parents will then pick up their child in our Child Watch Room (Available in Norwich Only).

- Parents must call the YMCA staff to let them know what time they will expect to arrive or to inform them of alternate transportation arrangements.
- Parents will be assessed a late fee of one dollar per child per minute that they are late. The clock at the child care site will be used to determine the fee charge. A late fee charge will then be added to the parents' monthly bill.
- In the event of consistent tardiness, a conference will be convened to discuss possible alternatives.
- In the event that the YMCA does not receive a prior phone call from the parent, the following procedures will be immediately implemented:
 - A YMCA staff member will contact parents for instructions.
 - If contact cannot be made, a YMCA staff member will call the emergency contact list to arrange pickup (parent will be charged one dollar per child each minute the emergency contact person is late.)

- If two hours late from official closing time and contact cannot be made to the child's parents or the emergency contact people, a call will be placed to the Child Protective Services to report an abandoned child. Staff members will then follow instructions given by Child Protective Services as to what further arrangements are necessary.
- Parents will be informed to contact Child Protective Services for further instructions.

HOLIDAYS/SCHOOL VACATIONS

The Fun Club program operate on days when the Norwich City Schools are closed except for the following holidays Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Good Friday, and Memorial Day. These are optional care days for which there is an additional fee. Snacks are provided in the morning and afternoon with Parents being responsible for supplying a bag lunch for their child. A bathing suit and towel are needed if your child wants to participate in the free swim time which is offered twice a day. Registration forms for all Fun Clubs will be available at the Child Care sites as well as the Norwich Family YMCA. You must register in advance at the Norwich YMCA Front Desk as space is limited.

HALF DAYS

A half-day program is available on Early Release Days for an additional fee. Registration is required in advance due to limited available space.



INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

The before and after school program runs consistent with the individual school districts. Weather conditions may alter program delivery schedules. When weather conditions close school before the normal starting time we will run our Norwich YMCA Fun Club program. If school is delayed, the morning program will run with the same hour delay. If all after school activities are cancelled, the program will run, but parents will be encouraged to pick up their children immediately after school dismissal.

Please listen to local radio stations for closing information.

TERMINATION POLICY

All Norwich Family YMCA Child Care Programs require a two week advance notice for termination from the program. Parents who fail to do so will still be liable for payment. The Norwich Family YMCA reserves the right to terminate child care services with a two-week advance notice to families. When the health, welfare, and safety of other children are at stake, the YMCA reserves the right to terminate child care services immediately. Possible reasons for termination of a child from services include, but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate behavior considered to be harmful to your child, the staff or others.
- Chronic tardiness at pickup time.
- Extended absenteeism.
- Overdue fees, (three months outstanding)
- Incident reports resulting from inappropriate behavior.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

The Parent check-out tables will contain any information that we need to communicate to our Parents. This will include information about our After School Program, Fun Club events, and YMCA Family activities.





**Norwich Family YMCA
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Norwich, NY 13815
Phone: (607)336-9622 x 28**